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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

# Our Wives

A Farce in Three Acts

By  
ANTHONY E. WILLS

*Author of "All Charley's Fault," "A Regiment  
of Two," "Liberty Corners," "Fighting for  
Freedom," etc.*

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BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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## Our Wives

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### CHARACTERS

ROSWELL CHANDLER, *a retired merchant.* (Old Man.)  
WALTER BLAIR, *his son-in-law.* (Comedy Lead.)  
OSCAR SIEBEL, *a composer.* (German.)  
LLOYD DEVEAUX, *a chronic invalid.* (Character Old Man.)  
JOHN STANTON, *a detective.* (Comedy.)  
MALLORY, *a reporter.* (Comedy.)  
FORD, *an expressman.* (Utility.)  
GILDA DEVEAUX, *wife of Deveaux.* (Lead.)  
MRS. CHANDLER, *wife of Roswell.* (Old Lady.)  
BEATTIE BLAIR, *wife of Walter.* (Straight.)  
JULIA, *a French maid.* (French.)

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### SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Room in the Sea Breeze Hotel, Atlantic City.  
Morning.

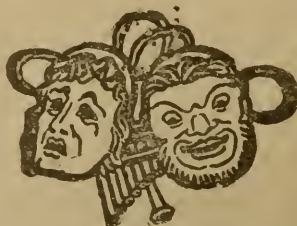
ACT II.—Home of Gilda Deveaux in New York City.  
Noon.

ACT III.—The same. Night.

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### NOTE

The same setting may be used for all three acts and the necessary change from Act I to Act II effected by placing a set mantle and fireplace in front of the bay window; hanging pictures on wall and using different furniture.



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# Our Wives

## ACT I

SCENE.—*A room in the Sea Breeze Hotel, Atlantic City.*

*Morning. [Doors R. I, C. and L. 3. Bay window L. I, with portières, apparently leading to a balcony overlooking the sea. Portières now open. Lady's desk and chair against wall, R. Two large trunks, containing various colored dresses, L. C. and R. C. of stage. Small tables directly in back of each trunk. Chairs, small tables with statuary, bric-à-brac, pictures, etc., distributed about to dress stage. Large mirror on wall, R. Carpet down.*

*At rise, JULIA, a pert French maid, wearing cap and apron, discovered packing trunk, L. C., and humming air the while.)*

JUL. Oh, I must hurry or madame will be late for ze train. *(Picks up skirt and holds up.)* Zis is very pretty. Madame is lucky to have so many beautiful gowns.

*Enter GILDA DEVEAUX, door at back, wearing a neat traveling dress.*

GIL. I'm so glad to find you packing, Julia. I never yet have learned the art of doing that properly.

JUL. I will be finished directly. *(Looks up.)* Has madame breakfasted?

GIL. *(crossing to mirror and looking at self.)* Yes—but I really had no appetite.

JUL. *(sympathetically.)* Ah, madame hasn't recovered from ze excitement of last night.

GIL. That's it. A first performance always upsets me so. *(Looks closely in mirror.)* I do declare I've a wrinkle on my brow! *(Turns to JUL. Anxiously.)* Tell me, dear,—how do you think it went?

JUL. Very well, madame. *(Enthusiastically.)* It was all very grand—*(with outstretched arms)* and when you sang —

GIL. (*interrupting her*). Never mind *my* singing. Do you think it will be a success?

JUL. (*proudly*). Ah, madame, how could it be otherwise with you in ze —

GIL. (*irritated; stamping foot*). You always see things with prejudiced eyes. Never mind me, Julia. Now, just imagine I were out of the cast.

JUL. Ah, madame, I could never imagine that.

GIL. (*provoked*). Oh, it's no use. You never seem able to give a candid — (JUL., *touched by GIL.'s action, is about to cry*. GIL., *observing her, changes tone and manner.*) Well, to—to — (*Places arms about her shoulders.*) There, there, dear—forgive me. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Only I—well, I'm so anxious to know the truth about the — (*An electric bell rings off. Her attention arrested.*) Hello. Who can that be? Goodness! no visitors, I hope. We haven't a minute to waste in getting our things in shape.

JUL. (*drying eyes on elbow*). I'll see who it is.

GIL. But first, Julia, you must promise to forgive my —

JUL. Really, madame, there is nothing to forgive. It was silly of me to take on so.

GIL. (*patting her on shoulder*). That's more like yourself again. There's a dear. (JUL., *smiling back at her, exits door at back*. GIL. *goes to mirror and surveys herself.*) I do believe the excitement of last night has aged me ten years. Oh, why, oh, why didn't I heed hubby's advice and leave well enough alone? I'll be the laughing stock of the metropolis if the thing's a failure.

*Enter OSCAR SIEBEL, an eccentric German composer, with long bushy yellow hair, red nose and wearing a red bow-tie, tight-fitting trousers, coat with a flounce around the bottom and a small felt hat perched on his head.*

OSCAR (*passionately*). Ah, mademoiselle, it does me honor to see and congratulate you.

(*Attempts to press her hand to his lips.*)

GIL. (*drawing hand away*). Really, Herr Siebel, you are very provoking. Must I again remind you that I am married?

OSCAR. Ach, yes. Dot is so. I always fergit it. Und

you can't blame me when I have always lofed der very ground you walk on.

GIL. (*irritated*). Please don't start *that* again so early in the morning.

OSCAR. I can't help it. If only you had said der one word dot time. One little word. (*Sighs.*) By golly, when I dink what I am—and what I might hev been—it makes me seasick in der head.

GIL. The question now is—what is the verdict?

OSCAR. Verdict? Von what?

GIL. (*surprised*). Gracious! and you are the composer!

OSCAR. Ach, by jiminy! You mean my opera? (*Claps hand to head.*) By golly, lofe is an awful ding. I nearly fer-git it—I am der comboser.

GIL. What did the audience think of the production?

OSCAR (*sadly*). Oh, say—I'm ashamed to tell you.

GIL. You don't mean —?

OSCAR. Von der looks of dings—we got a large-sized failure on our hands. We are lucky if der audience don't lynch us ven we play it in New York to-night.

GIL. (*wringing hands*). Can it be as bad as that?

OSCAR. Even worse! Der limit! Dere's only one ding can maybe save it.

GIL. And that?

OSCAR. Your solo in der last act. (*Draws manuscript from pocket and hurriedly turns to a page.*) Ach, yes—and another ding. (*Finds place.*) Wen you bow to der duke—don't do it dis way. It 'tain't right. You must put more high-toned society business in it. Shust watch me. (*Makes a bow.*) So—dot's how you did it. Now, dis is der way — (*Crosses legs and attempts to make a very low bow, finally losing balance and sprawling on floor.* GIL., *quickly at his side, helps him to feet.*) Vell, not shust exactly dot way—but someding like it. Dot's shust der idea.

GIL. And what of that horrid duet in the first act?

OSCAR. Where? (*Glances through manuscript.*)

GIL. Why, immediately after the entrance of the villagers.

OSCAR (*hurriedly turning pages*). Shust a minute, I find him. (*Locates place.*) Ach, yes. Here iss it. You mean— (*then running several bars of operatic selection in a cracked voice*) ta-ta, tee-tee, tum-tum—ta-ta—tra-la-la—tra-la-la-i-o! (*Looks up.*) Iss dot him?

GIL. Isn't it awful?

OSCAR. Vell, it tastes kind of sour. Hereafter we cut him out. (*Tears sheet from manuscript.*) So! I dink, by der changes we have made, we got a chance to pull through.

GIL. (*going to window; disconsolately*). Yes—one chance in a thousand.

OSCAR. Ach, be hopeful! Ain't it better den none at all? (*Confidentially.*) Only don't say it to my backers—if you see dem. Make dem believe it is a great success. You verstand? I need der money.

GIL. (*suddenly looking off through window*). Hello—as I live, it's that horrid man again! (*Calls aloud.*) Julia! Julia!

OSCAR (*puzzled; business*). Vatt iss it? Vat iss it?

GIL. (*partly behind portières and drawing OSCAR beside her; in deep tones*). Do you see that rowboat out there?

OSCAR (*looking off; imitates her tone*). Y-e-s! Where is it?

GIL. (*stamping foot*). Don't you see —

(*Has apparently stepped on OSCAR's foot.*)

OSCAR (*jumping up and down with pain*). Und can't you see? I've got corns like mountains. By golly, I bet you weigh five hundred pounds.

GIL. (*pointing off*). There it is—about two hundred feet away.

OSCAR (*looking off*). Ach, ches—now I spot him.

GIL. He's been out in that boat watching this window ever since our arrival here three days ago.

OSCAR. You don't say so? Where hev I seen dot face before?

*Enter JUL., hurriedly, door at back.*

JUL. Did you call me, madame?

GIL. Quick, Julia, look there! (*Points out of window.*)

(*JUL. cautiously looks off—then gives a shriek.*)

OSCAR (*business*). I wonder if she seen der same thing I seen?

JUL. (*excitedly*). 'Mon dieu! it is ze same gentleman who came down on our train from New York.

OSCAR (*looking off; suddenly*). By golly—now I remember! It iss der feller what occupied Box A at der theatre last night.

GIL. (*dramatically drawing portières together ; with flashing eyes*). Who can it be, I wonder?

OSCAR (*taking long steps to R. of stage ; alarmed*). Blease, madam, don't look at me dot way. I ain't der reason fer it—believe me. (*A bell rings off.*)

JUL. I'll see who it is.

GIL. Thank goodness we return to New York this morning. If this person continues to annoy me, I'll report him to my husband.

OSCAR (*quietly*). Better not your husband.

GIL. (*turning on him*). And why not?

OSCAR (*business*). Ouch now—don't git excited. I only had an idea. Didn't you say he was awful jealous von you?

GIL. (*wildly*). You don't mean to imply that my husband may have set some one to watch me?

OSCAR. Say—maybe it is better hereafter I keep my mouth shut. I always put my foot in it.

GIL. (*pacing floor*). Yes, yes, that's the explanation. It's my husband's doings. I'm being watched! Watched! (*Quickly to door L. 3 ; to OSCAR.*) Here—quick, in this room. Whoever this may be—you must not be seen.

OSCAR (*nervously*). Yes, sir—(*then confusedly*) I mean, no, mam. (*Off L. 3.*)

GIL. (*quickly down to trunk and busies herself packing*). Why didn't I think of it before? It's a detective! Oh, what—oh, what am I to do?

*Enter JUL., hurriedly, door C.*

JUL. Please, madame, Messieurs Chandler and Blair! They would insist on coming here.

*Enter WALTER BLAIR, a smooth-shaven young man, about twenty-five, neatly clothed, and wearing a straw hat with a fancy ribbon ; followed by ROSWELL CHANDLER, aged about sixty, gray haired, short statured and wearing a silk hat, frock coat, spats, etc.*

GIL. (*surprised*). Why, good-morning, gentlemen.

BLAIR } (*breathlessly*). Good-morning. (*To JUL.*) Leave  
CHAN. } us alone.

CHAN. Close the door!

BLAIR. Let no one know we're here.

(BLAIR and CHAN. *sink on trunks and remove hats, place same on small tables behind trunks.* JUL. *gingerly exits door at back.*)

GIL. (*puzzled*). Has anything gone wrong?

BLAIR. }  
CHAN. } Has anything gone right?

BLAIR. Everything's wrong. (*To CHAN.*) Tell her, old man.

CHAN. (*sadly*). No—you.

GIL. I suppose it's the opera.

BLAIR. Confound it, no—it's my wife.

CHAN. (*sadly*). Not forgetting—mine.

GIL. (*surprised*). Your wives?

BLAIR }  
CHAN. } (*sighing and sadly repeating*). Our wives.

GIL. I don't understand.

CHAN. I wish *I* didn't.

BLAIR (*recovering somewhat*). You see—it's this way. You mayn't be aware of it, but this is the first theatrical venture we've ever financed.

CHAN. And it's the *last* for me.

BLAIR. I met this fellow Siebel at the club; grew enthusiastic over the proposition of backing his comic opera, "The Fleur-de-lis," and up to date it's cost me ten thousand.

CHAN. (*sorrowfully*). Me too.

BLAIR. But that isn't where the shoe pinches. I've kept it from my wife.

CHAN. (*sadly*). *I* didn't *dare* tell *mine*.

BLAIR. We kept it from our wives, intending to break the news after the thing proved a success.

CHAN. (*meekly*). It all looked so nice on paper.

BLAIR. But after the miserable failure of last night——

GIL. Then you don't think it was a success?

CHAN. Success? (*Holds hands above head in horror.*) Good heaven! It was awful!

BLAIR. You see—it isn't what we think—the audience had something to say about it. But to come to the principal——

CHAN. (*dolefully*). The tragic part of the story.

BLAIR. We were led to believe that two thousand dollars would launch the thing. But alas, it has required ten times that sum. And once in, we couldn't get out without losing that which we had already invested.

CHAN. So we kept on digging—digging—digging!

BLAIR. Until I've drawn every dollar I had in the bank.

CHAN. While I even mortgaged the furniture.

BLAIR. When the crash comes ——

CHAN. (*trembling*). When it comes ——

BLAIR. —— and our wives learn the truth ——

CHAN. (*shaking head*). Well, it's going to beat any storm that ever struck this town!

GIL. I'm so sorry. Isn't there a way of ——

BLAIR. Keeping the truth from them? (*Sadly shakes head.*) No—I'm afraid not.

CHAN. Our wives had the pleasure—if such it could be called—of witnessing the performance last night.

GIL. Ah, the ladies in the box with you were ——

BLAIR } (*sadly*). Our wives!

CHAN. }  
GIL. Whatever are you going to do?

BLAIR. Well, if the worst comes to the worst, I'm prepared for it. (*Takes long letter from pocket.*)

CHAN. (*following his example; disconsolately*). So am I.

GIL. (*puzzled*). What do you mean?

BLAIR. I've written a farewell note to Beattie, and now all that remains is—(*dramatically*) one plunge in the dark blue sea ——

CHAN. (*imitating him; shivering*). “In the dark blue sea ——”

BLAIR. And all is over.

CHAN. (*shuddering; imitating him*). “All is over.”

GIL. You silly things. You mustn't do that. Where there's life—there's hope.

CHAN. } (*exchanging glances*). There's hope?

BLAIR }

GIL. Yes. Herr Siebel has made a number of changes in the score since last night, and eliminated the dull parts. What wouldn't go in Atlantic City *may* make a big hit in New York. (*Pats them on back.*) So be of good cheer. (*Takes letters from each.*) All isn't lost yet.

CHAN. } (*on either side, attempting to embrace her*). You're a

BLAIR } dear.

GIL. (*laughingly holding them off*). Remember you're married.

CHAN. (*sadly*). I can't forget *that*.

GIL. (*placing letters on small tables*). So you'll have no further need of these horrid things—you must put the thought of suicide far out of your mind.

*Enter JUL., C., with letter.*

CHAN. What do you suggest?

GIL. Just a moment. (*To JUL.*) For me, Julia?

JUL. Yes, madame—a messenger just left it.

[*Exit, door at back.*]

GIL. (*taking note and reading; then starts*). Good gracious!

CHAN. } (*business*). What is it?

BLAIR } (*business*). What is it?

GIL. Your wives are coming here!

CHAN. } (*sinking on trunks*). Our wives!

BLAIR } (*sinking on trunks*). Our wives!

GIL. Yes. (*Looks at note.*) It appears that yours—(*refers to BLAIR*) is one of my old schoolmates.

BLAIR (*quickly*). By Jove—that's so. She recognized you from the box last night.

CHAN. And said something about paying you a call.

GIL. (*looking around*). It wouldn't do for you to be found here.

CHAN. Well, I should say not. (*Starts toward door C.*) I'm off!

MALLORY (*heard without*). Never mind, little one—I'll take a chance.

GIL. (*catching CHAN. by arm*). Wait! It's that reporter again!

CHAN. } (*starting*). A reporter? Great heaven!

BLAIR } (*starting*). A reporter? Great heaven!

BLAIR (*wildly*). Now we are in for it.

CHAN. (*running about; whining*). I told you we'd get into trouble.

BLAIR (*angrily*). Oh, that's all you did do. Let's hide somewhere!

CHAN. (*to GIL., pleadingly*). Please don't tell him where we are!

BLAIR. Or *who* we are! (*Espies portières.*) Ah, those curtains! The very——

(*Quickly over to portières and about to draw them open.*)

GIL. (*firmly*). Stop! (*BLAIR abruptly halts.*) I've a reason for not wanting those portières drawn aside.

BLAIR. Yes, but what am I to do?

CHAN. Don't always think of yourself. Give *me* a thought.

BLAIR (*espying door, R.*). Ah—that room over there!

(*Makes a dash for it.*)

CHAN. (*same time*). And this one here!

(*Refers to L. Makes a dash for it.*)

*Enter MALLORY, a clean-cut, sportily-clothed, young reporter, door C., wearing a golf cap.*

GIL. Too late!

(BLAIR and CHAN. *just about to exit, stop in confusion.*)

MAL. (*observing them, halts at door*). Pardon me, but I —

GIL. (*indignant*). What do you mean by forcing yourself into my apartments this way?

MAL. (*confusedly stuffing golf cap in coat pocket*). Well, I just dropped in to get that story about the diamond necklace you promised me for our next Sunday's issue. (*Looks from CHAN. to BLAIR.*) But I didn't expect you'd have company.

BLAIR (*business*). I'm not company, sir—(*stammering*) I'm—I'm — (*Aside; despairingly.*) For goodness' sake — what am I?

CHAN. (*clearing throat; to MAL.*). He's the lady's brother.

MAL. (*surprised*). O-h. Her brother, eh? (*To CHAN.*) And you, sir?

(CHAN. *business.*)

BLAIR (*having recovered composure*). Him? Why, he's—(*business*) he's her father.

CHAN. (*groaning*). Oh, lor'! (*Aside.*) If my wife heard that!

MAL. I'm sure I'm very glad to know both you gentlemen.

BLAIR. }  
CHAN. } That's all right—don't mention it.

(MAL. *draws note-book from pocket and begins to write therein.*)

BLAIR (*watching him*). But you needn't publish our meeting in your confounded paper.

CHAN. (*business*). I should hope not.

*Enter OSCAR, hurriedly, from L. 3, with outstretched hands, leaving hat in room.*

OSCAR. Ah, my dear Mallory. (*Warmly shakes his hand.*) I thought I heard your voice. Many thanks for your nice write-up.

MAL. Don't say a word.

OSCAR. (*for the first time observing CHAN. and BLAIR.*) Ach!—und if it ain't my dear friends! (*Warmly offers hands to CHAN. and BLAIR.*) I'm so glad you dropped in.

CHAN. (*dolefully, aside, as he shakes his hand.*) Would I could drop out again.

MAL. (*to OSCAR, preparing to write.*) There was only one thing, Herr Siebel. You neglected to inform me who is presenting your opera. Is it a metropolitan firm?

OSCAR. Vy, no! (*Refers to CHAN. and BLAIR.*) Dese gentlemen!

(*BLAIR and CHAN. start and tug vigorously at his coat.*)

MAL. (*writing.*) Ah—Miss Deveaux's father and brother.

OSCAR. Fodder und nodding — (*About to divulge their names.*) Messrs.—

(*BLAIR kicks OSCAR in shin. OSCAR lets out a cry and hops up and down in agony.*)

BLAIR (*coolly.*) Messrs. Brown —

CHAN. (*with sweeping bow, adding.*) — Jones —

GIL. (*now L.*) — and Co. It's a company, you know.

OSCAR (*feeling of shin.*) By golly—den I must be der Co. (*To MAL., taking him by arm and leading him down R.*) You see I am only der comboser—der musiker of der ding.

MAL. (*winking at him significantly.*) And naturally don't bother with the details, eh?

OSCAR. Dot's it exactly. You hit der top on der nail right away. (*Then aside.*) I wonder what iss it he means by dot? (*Imitates MAL.'s winking.*) I find it oudt right away.

(*Engages MAL. in animated conversation.*)

*Enter JUL., door C., with tray bearing two cards.*

GIL. (*to JUL.*) What now, Julia?

CHAN. (*nervously, to BLAIR.*) Now is our opportunity. Let's get away!

BLAIR. Let's !

(Both take long strides toward door C.)

GIL. (*glancing at cards ; starts*). Your wives !

BLAIR } (*starting*). Wow !  
CHAN. }

GIL. (*to JUL., excitedly*). Don't show them up, Julia —

CHAN. (*whining*). Or they'll show us up.

JUL. (*nervously*). Please, madame, I have already done so—they will be here directly.

BLAIR } (*starting wildly about*). What shall we do ?  
CHAN. }

MAL. } (*their attention drawn*). What has happened ?  
OSCAR }

BLAIR (*despairingly*). That's just it—it hasn't happened yet.

CHAN. It's only on the way.

GIL. (*opening door L. 3*). Here—quick—into this room.

BLAIR. } Thanks—thanks. [*Exeunt, confusedly, L. 3.*  
CHAN. }

GIL. (*to OSCAR and MAL.*). And now I must beg of you gentlemen to hold a quiet tongue.

OSCAR (*taking long strides toward door C.*). I dink it is better I git outd of dis.

GIL. (*catching OSCAR by arm*). Do you promise ?

MAL. On condition I get that diamond story.

GIL. Yes, yes, anything—only —

JUL. (*at door C., finger to lips*). S-h, madame, they are here.

*Enter, door C., MRS. NINA CHANDLER, a middle-aged woman, and BEATTIE BLAIR, about twenty-three, both stylishly gowned.*

BEATTIE (*espying GIL.*). Gilda ! (*Throws arms about her.*)

GIL. (*warmly*). Beattie !

BEATTIE (*looking GIL. over*). I recognized you at once. (*Presents MRS. C.*) My mother.

GIL. (*warmly shaking MRS. C.'s hand*). I'm so glad to know you.

MRS. C. My daughter has so often spoken of you.

GIL. (*glancing nervously toward door L.*). Is that so ?

BEATTIE. Oh, it was about our good old school days—don't you remember ?

GIL. I shall never forget them—the best days of all.

BEATTIE. And to think that we should lose track of each other for all these years and then to meet again this way. Isn't it glorious? (*Then for the first time espies MAL. and OSCAR.*) Oh, I wasn't aware you had —

OSCAR. Dot's all right. Go right ahead, ladies. Don't mind us.

GIL. (*presenting OSCAR*). Allow me to introduce Herr Siebel, our composer.

OSCAR (*bowing low*). Ladies—it give me much bleasure.

BEATTIE (*admiringly looking at him*). A real, live composer, eh?

OSCAR (*business, looking himself over*). Well, I like dot. I always *thought* I was alive.

GIL. (*introducing MAL.*). And Mr. Mallory, reporter on the *Sea Breeze Times*.

MRS. C. } Delighted to meet you, I'm sure.  
BEATTIE. }

MRS. C. (*to MAL.*). But you mustn't mention you met us here. Our husbands, you know —

BEATTIE (*laughingly*). —aren't supposed to know a solitary word about it.

MAL. (*winking at OSCAR*). I see —

OSCAR (*winking back at him*). —said the blind man.

BEATTIE (*to GIL.*). Oh, but tell me, Gilda—how did you come to change your name from Rowe to Deveaux?

GIL. The minister changed that. I'm married, dear.

MRS. C. (*to BEATTIE*). See—I told you so.

BEATTIE. I thought it only your stage name. You know, I'm married too.

GIL. (*glancing toward door, L.; then as if surprised*). Really!

BEATTIE. Going on to three years now.

OSCAR. Yes, und we got to be going too.

MRS. C. Beattie got one of the best husbands!

BEATTIE. So honest—so true!

OSCAR (*watching her; aside*). Dot's enough for me. (*To MAL.*) Coming?

MAL. Guess I will make a break. (*To ladies.*) Ladies, permit us to bid you a good-morning.

BEATTIE (*having discovered BLAIR'S straw hat on table*). Why—what's this? (*Takes it up. Starts.*) Walter's hat!

MRS. C. (*discovering CHAN.'S hat on other table; picks it up*). And your father's! (*All business.*)

GIL. (*finally nervously taking C.*). Pardon me—(*takes hats from them*) but they belong to these two gentlemen.

(*Offers OSCAR silk hat and MAL. straw one.*)

MRS. C. } (*puzzled*). But I ——  
BEATTIE }

(GIL. *winks at MAL. and OSCAR.*)

OSCAR } (*understanding ; emphatically*). Yes—to us !  
MAL. } (*With sweeping bows.*) Ladies—good-morning.

(*Place hats on heads, lock arms and pompously exeunt door C.*)

BEATTIE (*staggered*). Did I ever ?

MRS. C. I could have sworn that was my husband's hat. (GIL., *up to door at back, looks off an instant ; MRS. C. glances back at her ; then down R. ; aside to BEATTIE ; emphatically.*) It was Roswell's hat. Now I know why your father came to Atlantic City.

BEATTIE (*brokenly*). And don't you recollect,—Walter didn't want us to accompany him here at all ?

MRS. C. All their mysterious goings-on of the past three days are now quite clear to me. But if that was your father's hat ——

BEATTIE (*quickly*). And the other, Walter's ——

MRS. C. (*cautiously*). They must have called here this morning.

BEATTIE. And still be in these apartments !

MRS. C. (*glancing back at GIL., then with finger to lips*). S-h. (*Cautiously, as she espies portières.*) Ah—behind those portières ! Just watch me !

GIL. (*closing door and coming down*). You must pardon the appearance of these rooms. We are returning to the city on the ten-thirty train. (*Nervously glances toward L. 3.*)

MRS. C. (*now near portières*). On the ten-thirty, eh ? You'll have to hurry. (*Suddenly draws portières aside.*)

GIL. (*observing her action ; quickly*). Why, what are you doing ?

MRS. C. (*coolly*). Just observing what a pretty view you have. (*Looks out.*) And you're right on the water.

GIL. (*nervously*). Yes—this portion of the hotel appears to

be built on a sort of pier. (*Crosses to R.*) But let me show you the view from this room. It is truly beautiful.

MRS. C. (*aside to BEATTIE*). She's anxious to get us out of this room. Keep your eyes open, my child. (*Pompously crosses to door, R.*) Thank you.

[*Exit off R., followed by BEATTIE.*]

GIL. (*at door, R., looking toward L. 3*). If they only have sense enough to get away now they've got the opportunity.

(*Off L. 3.*)

BLAIR (*bobbing head out of door, L. 3, looks around cautiously, then out—calling off*). Come on, old man, it's all right.

*Enter CHAN., cautiously, door L. 3.*

CHAN. I thought they'd never go.

BLAIR. We haven't a minute to lose. Get your hat and follow me. (*Looks on table for hat.*) Great Scott! where is that confounded ——

CHAN. (*looking around*). I can't find my hat either.

BLAIR. By Jove, we can't be seen leaving the hotel without something to cover our heads.

CHAN. (*looking around*). That, in itself, would look suspicious. (*Sound heard off window.*)

BLAIR. Hello! What was that?

CHAN. (*his knees trembling*). It seemed to come from there.

(*Points toward window.*)

BLAIR (*gasping*). Great Cæsar! It can't be possible that we've been ——

CHAN. (*cautiously making for L. 3*). I'm going back to my old hiding-place again. (*Off L. 3.*)

BLAIR (*taking long strides to L. 3*). Then—so am I.

(*On reaching door, suddenly dashes off. Empty stage for an instant. Then JOHN STANTON, a thick-set, dark-mustached man, bobs head through portières. A small camera is slung over his shoulder.*)

STAN. Hello! der coast is clear at last. (*Steps into room.*) Now to git a line on things and I'll be hunky-dory. (*Cautiously moves to C.*) Funny dere ain't no one about. (*Espies R. 3.*) Ah, dis room! I hear voices within.

(Edges cautiously over to door, R. 3, and is about to peep through keyhole.)

*Enter JUL., suddenly, c.*

JUL. (*espying him, giving a cry*). M'sieur! (*Starts.*)

STAN. (*confusedly*). Hully gee—what a fright. Say—don't ever do dat ag'in.

JUL. (*alarmed*). What are you doing here, m'sieur?

STAN. Me? Well, you see — (*Clears throat.*) H'm —how kin I explain it—the fact is —

JUL. (*crossing to R.*). I'll tell madame.

STAN. (*catching her by arm*). Hold on. Don't do dat. Mebbe you wouldn't mind makin' fifty plunkers.

JUL. (*puzzled; repeating*). Plunkers?

STAN. Silver cart-wheels. In plain English—fifty dollars.

JUL. Oui, m'sieur. I have nevar had so much money at one time in life.

STAN. Well, you're a girl after my own liking, or I wouldn't put you wise. You can earn this money without winking an eye.

JUL. (*puzzled*). You are not—not a burglar, m'sieur?

STAN. Sure not. I'm a detective. Now come here— (*roughly drawing her to him, glancing about, and speaking in loud whisper*) and listen. You're der maid, I take it?

JUL. (*nervously*). Oui, oui, m'sieur. How you know that?

STAN. It's my business to know everything. (*Looks around again before speaking.*) Guess you're on as well as I am, that your master is the original green-eyed monster.

JUL. Oui, oui, m'sieur. Madame's husband is very jealous.

STAN. And that's what brings me here on der job. He hired me to come down here and do the watch act.

JUL. Ha, ha—I see. But how did you get in zis room, m'sieur, without my seeing you?

STAN. Simply because I came in by that window.

(*Points at window.*)

JUL. Ah! zen you are ze man in ze boat?

STAN. That's it. But not so loud. (*Glances around.*) I saw two men in this room only a few minutes before I entered, and I thought if I could only manage to snap a few pictures, de old guy would come up handsome like.

(*Women heard off R., talking.*)

JUL. (*nervously*). Madame is coming.

STAN. Dat's my cue to be on der move. Now don't fer-git. If you keep mum—and say nuthin'—der fifty's yours.

(*At door, c.*)

JUL. (*nervously*). And if I refuse?

STAN. Well—it'll cost you your job,—savvy?

JUL. (*nervously*). Hurry, hurry, m'sieur.

STAN. (*opening door*). I'll lay low in the hall and keep my eagle eye peeled. (*Off quickly, c.*)

JUL. (*closing door after him and standing with back against it, breathing hard*). Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?

*Enter CHAN. and BLAIR, door L. 3.*

BLAIR. Who was that man?

JUL. (*in loud whispers*). Ze detective!

CHAN. Detective? Good lor', what's up?

JUL. I think it eez everyzing. He is looking for you.

BLAIR. For me? Then I'm going to get out of here, hat or no hat. (*Starts for door c.*)

JUL. (*blocking his way*). No, no, m'sieur, he is out there—waiting for you.

CHAN. (*sadly*). And our wives?

JUL. Are in zat room. (*Points to R.*)

BLAIR. It's all up!

JUL. (*suddenly*). I have eet. Ze detective came in by that window. He had a boat.

(*Hurries to window and draws portières aside.*)

BLAIR }  
CHAN. } (*jubilant*). A boat? The very thing!

JUL. (*looking off*). But alas—alas, it eez gone—adrift! See!

(*BLAIR and CHAN. look over her shoulder.*)

BLAIR. You're right. We're cornered.

CHAN. (*despairingly*). Hemmed in on all sides.

BLAIR (*quickly removing coat*). Well, there's only one thing left. (*Throws coat on floor.*) And that's to swim for it. (*Makes move as if to dive from window.*)

CHAN. (*removing his coat, imitates BLAIR's business; tremblingly*). Yes—swim for it!

JUL. (*catching them by arm*). Stop, messieurs! You are taking your lives in your hands.

BLAIR. What's the odds? We've nothing to live for now.

CHAN. (*cautiously peering from window*). That water does look a bit cold. Guess I'll change my mind.

BEATTIE (*heard off R.*). You are right, it is beautiful. And now I should like to view the water from the other room.

BLAIR (*starting*). My wife!

JUL. And coming here!

CHAN. (*running wildly about*). What shall we do?

JUL. (*hurriedly glancing about*). If only I could think of a way. (*Suddenly.*) Ah, ze trunks!

BLAIR } (*jubilantly*). The very thing!

CHAN. }

(*Both quickly open trunks and removing trays, toss them out of window.*)

JUL. (*wringing hands*). Gentlemen! Gentlemen! What are you doing?

BLAIR. We'll square things later. (*To CHAN.*) Hurry, old man, hurry. (*Climbs in trunk.*)

CHAN. (*getting into trunk; sarcastically*). A dignified proceeding for a man of my years.

(*BLAIR and CHAN. are now seated in trunks and holding up tops.*)

BLAIR (*to CHAN.*). Are you ready?

CHAN. (*sorrowfully*). Quite.

BLAIR. Then let her go!

(*CHAN. and BLAIR simultaneously lower tops with a bang.*)

JUL. (*sighing in relief*). Thank goodness, they are what ze Americans call—(*endeavoring to recall phrase*) oh, yes, "out of sight."

*Enter GIL., followed by MRS. C. and BEATTIE, door R.*

GIL. Right this way, ladies. (*Down to JUL. Anxiously, aside to her.*) Did they manage to get out of that room?

JUL. (*nervously*). Yes, madame, yes.

GIL. (*sighing in relief*). Thank goodness for that. (*To MRS. C. and BEATTIE.*) My maid will lead the way.

MRS. C. So good of you. (*Up stage, nudging BEATTIE. Aside.*) Now keep your eyes open, my child. Look behind the curtains, under the bed—everywhere!

GIL. (*to JUL.*). Go, Julia—show the ladies the west room.

JUL. (*nervously*). But, madame, I——

GIL. (*irritated*). Please do as I say. The expressman will soon be here, and we must be ready.

JUL. (*endeavoring to speak*). But, madame, I——

GIL. (*stamping foot*). What obstinacy! Do as I say!

JUL. (*sighing*). Very well, madame. (*To MRS. C. and BEATTIE.*) Step zis way. (*Leads them off L. 3.*)

GIL. (*quickly up to L. 3 and closing door*). How fortunate they got away! (*Knock on door C.*) Why, who can that be? (*Opens door.*) Come in. (*Enter FORD, an expressman, and assistant, with two hand trunk-trucks, which they roll into room. GIL., surprised.*) You're not the expressman?

FORD. Dat's what. We're after two trunks.

GIL. Goodness! Why, you're early.

FORD. Late, ye mean. That show train pulls out in ten minutes. We've got to hustle as it is to make it.

GIL. (*all excitement*). Then my watch must be awfully late. (*Down to trunks.*) I don't really know whether Julia has finished packing.

FORD. Well, den we can't wait. (*Starts toward door C.*) Come on, Jim!

GIL. (*glancing around*). Here, wait! I guess everything's ready. Just lend a hand. (*To FORD and assistant.*) Please lock and strap these trunks—while I get my things.

(*Quickly off R.*)

(*FORD and assistant strap and hurriedly lock trunks, and then in businesslike manner place trunks on hand trunk-trucks and wheel them off, door C.*)

*Enter MRS. C. and BEATTIE, door L.*

BEATTIE. You see, mamma, we were mistaken after all. I knew Walter wouldn't deceive me that way.

MRS. C. I have my own ideas about Walter, dear. (*Comes down R. and espies CHAN.'s coat on floor.*) What's this? (*Starts.*) Your father's coat?

BEATTIE (*coming down L.*). No, no, mamma, you must be mistaken! (*Then suddenly espies BLAIR's on floor before her. Gives a shriek and picks it up.*) And Walter's!

*Enter JUL., hurriedly, door L.*

JUL. (*coming C., looks from L. to R.*). Where are they? Where are they?

MRS. C. } (*holding up coats*). That's just what we would  
BEATTIE } like to know!

JUL. (*wringing hands*). I mean madame's trunks.

*Enter GIL., wearing hat, traveling cloak and carrying bags and bundles.*

GIL. The trunks? Why, they've just been taken away by the expressman!

JUL. (*hysterical*). Ze expressman? Zen it is ze finish of ze gentlemen!

GIL. (*to JUL.*). Why, didn't they get away?

JUL. Yes, madame—(*then close to GIL.*) but *inside* ze trunks! (*GIL. gives a scream, and dropping bags and bundles faints in JUL.'s arms. JUL. struggles with her.*) Help! Help!

(*MRS. C. and BEATTIE, on either side, frantically fan GIL. with husbands' coats.*)

PICTURE

QUICK CURTAIN

## ACT II

SCENE.—*The home of GILDA DEVEAUX in New York City. Time, noon. Doors R. 1, C. and L. 3. Mantel and fireplace L. 1, with clock, etc. The same setting for Act I can be used here and a change in appearance effected by placing a set mantel and fireplace in front of bay window; hanging pictures on wall and using different furniture. Sofa against wall, U. R. Table against wall, R. Chair alongside of same; a telephone on table. Chair in front of fireplace. Screen right of C. door.*

*(At rise, LLOYD DEVEAUX, a middle-aged man, with thin iron-gray hair and waxed mustache and imperial, wearing a bath or lounging robe, his foot badly swollen and swathed in bandages, discovered seated at table, his foot resting on hassock.)*

DEV. *(angrily, in telephone)*. Hello, hello! Is this the information bureau? *(Loudly.)* I say—is this the information bureau? *(After pause.)* Eh—what's that? Well, why don't you say so? *(Repeats much louder.)* I say—why don't you say so? *(Pause. Then in telephone.)* I want to find out when that train arrives from Atlantic City. *(Surprised.)* Got in half hour ago, you say? *(Loudly.)* Then where's my wife? *(Loudly.)* I say—where's my wife? *(Pause.)* You don't know? Well, she was supposed to have come down on your confounded train. *(Starts.)* What's that? *(Angrily.)* None of your impudence. If I had you here, sir, I'd soundly thrash you with my cane! Bah—*(then repeating still louder)* I said—bah, sir!

*Enter GIL., C., wearing traveling cloak as before, and followed by JUL., carrying bags and bundles.*

GIL. *(down to DEV., patting him on shoulder)*. Heigho—hubby.

DEV. *(turning and catching her by hand; joyfully)*. Ah, my dear—here you are.

GIL. Yes, dear, at last. *(Draws hand away. To JUL.)* You can put those things in my room, Julia.

JUL. Oui, madame. (*Off R.*)

DEV. I've been trying to get word to you the last half hour. (*Anxiously.*) And now tell me—how did it go?

GIL. (*removing hat and cloak*). The opera, you mean?

DEV. Yes.

GIL. Not as smoothly as it should have—but Herr Siebel, the composer, has made several changes since the premier performance, which augur well for the success of the enterprise.

DEV. (*disappointedly*). I'm sorry for that. You know, my dear, how greatly I abhor theatricals, especially where you are concerned. I had hoped, when you became my wife, to overcome these aspirations on your part—but alas, I appear to have been unsuccessful.

GIL. It is the one hobby, dear, to me, and surely you wouldn't —

DEV. Now don't let's go all over that again. I know your liking and all that—and yet I had hoped for a failure of your present starring vehicle.

GIL. (*surprised*). You had hoped for it?

DEV. (*slowly nodding head in assent*). Yes—anything to discourage you. I believed a failure might cause you to retire from the stage once and for all times.

GIL. You surprise me.

DEV. My dear, you know my great wealth. I have given you country houses, Swiss chalets, yachts, motor-cars, and everything one could desire. I should imagine you would be willing to give up this silly notion just to please me.

GIL. (*her arms about his shoulders*). There, there, you don't understand the fascination of the thing.

DEV. Fascination indeed. Bah! Is there any fascination in appearing in a failure?

GIL. Oh, but the opera hasn't proven a failure as yet.

DEV. (*anxiously*). Ah—then if it does?

GIL. Why, I suppose that *would* make a difference. (*Goes to C., and takes up cloak and hat.*) I do believe, hubby, that if you weren't so antagonistic—I wouldn't be so anxious for the stage. (*At door, R., laughingly.*) It's the things beyond our reach that we always seem to want. (*Off R.*)

DEV. (*bitterly*). I was right—I was right. Gilda only married me for my money. I'm good enough to pay the bills. But never mind, Stanton may have news for me. In the event of which I'll firmly put my foot down — (*Brings down bandaged foot heavily on floor, then sets up a yell and jumps*

*up and down on one foot.*) Ouch—but not *that* way! No, not that way!

*Enter JUL., hurriedly from R.*

JUL. Ah, m'sieur, anything wrong?

DEV. (*angrily*). No, everything's right. (*In commanding tone.*) Here, take hold and get my foot back on that hassock.

JUL. Oui, oui, m'sieur.

(*Kneels beside him and takes hold of his foot.*)

DEV. And stop that—(*imitating her*) “wee-wee” business! (*Gives a start.*) Ouch! Be careful, will you? You're as clumsy as— (*Gives another cry.*) Oh, what a set! (*Slowly lowers himself on chair and directs JUL.*) Gently now—gently. There—that's it—now slowly. (*Sinks in chair with a sigh.*) At last—at last! (*JUL., holding his foot suspended over hassock, suddenly lets go hold.* DEV., *as foot falls on hassock, gives a cry.*) O-h! (*Then, with flashing eyes, brandishes cane.*) I knew it, you little vixen! You did it on purpose.

JUL. (*c., trembling*). No, no, m'sieur.

DEV. You're in league with my wife—your mistress. (*Brandishes cane.*) Begone! I'll discharge the whole household! Begone, I say!

JUL. (*starting c.*). Yes, m'sieur.

DEV. (*as she reaches door*). Stay! (*JUL. timidly comes down c.* DEV. *changes tone.*) I suppose you kept your eyes well open while away?

JUL. (*puzzled*). Oui, oui, m'sieur.

DEV. Stop that “wee-wee” business. (*Glances around cautiously before again speaking.*) And noted everything that went on?

JUL. Oui, oui, m'sieur. (*Then claps hands quickly over mouth. Confusedly.*) I beg ze pardon, m'sieur.

DEV. Good! (*Takes coin from pocket and offers her.*) Now take this, my dear—

JUL. (*taking it*). Oh, thank you, m'sieur.

DEV. (*glancing cautiously around; in loud whispers*). —and tell me *what* you saw.

JUL. (*imitating him, looks cautiously around, then in loud whispers*). Everything?

DEV. (*eagerly; in loud whispers*). Everything!

JUL. Well, I—I didn't see *anything*, m'sieur.

DEV. (*angrily*). Begone! Clear out!

JUL. (*at door, c.*). Oui, oui, m'sieur.

[*Exit, laughingly.*

DEV. (*letting out a roar*). The servants are one and all in league with her. I don't see what a hold Gilda has on them. I am always kind and gentle—yet they bow and scrape before me as if I were a tyrant. (*Enter STAN., suddenly through fireplace, L. DEV. gives a start.*) Stanton!

STAN. At your service! (*Finger to lips.*) S-h!

(*Cautiously up to c., and looks off, then down to c. Strikes pose.*)

DEV. (*puzzled*). Whatever made you come that way?

STAN. I have no time to waste in explanation. Suffice it when I say—I'm here.

DEV. (*anxiously*). Anything new?

STAN. (*glancing around, then taking out note-book*). I watched your wife's apartments from a boat for three long days.

DEV. Yes, yes, but get down to facts. Forget the details.

*Enter JUL., door c., then observing STAN., draws behind screen and intently listens.*

STAN. Well, I tracked two men to her rooms.

DEV. (*rubbing hands together*). Good. Were they young or old?

STAN. Both.

DEV. And their names?

STAN. Didn't manage that.

DEV. (*disappointedly*). The most important thing of all. You should have followed them to their hotels when they walked out.

STAN. The trouble is—they didn't *walk*.

DEV. Ridiculous!

STAN. But came out in your wife's trunks.

DEV. (*staggered*). You—you don't mean it.

(*JUL. withdraws, c.*)

STAN. Once I was sure they'd quitted the rooms, I made for the depot and got there just in time to see the trunks put on the train. You can bet I camped right alongside o' them till

we landed in New York, and from the groans I heard every time the car jostled a bit, I know my two friends had rough going.

DEV. And later developments?

STAN. Dere ain't been none. The trunks are on der way here now. I seen 'em both put safe on de express wagon. I thought it best to have 'em brought right up here.

DEV. (*bitterly*). Yes—yes! I'll make the scoundrels answer to me—instead of the courts. Armed to the teeth, I will personally superintend the opening of those trunks. (*Then changes tone.*) But what of the opera?

STAN. Well, boss, it's a toss-up. Some say it'll be a go—others jes' the opposite. It all depends on to-night.

DEV. It *must* be a failure.

STAN. Your sayin' so won't make it one

DEV. Ah, but I've thought out a plan. (*Glances around before speaking.*) You must engage half a dozen lieutenants, hire dress suits for all, purchase the best orchestra seats, and attend to-night's performance.

STAN. I'm on—I'm wise. You want us to queer the show.

DEV. Exactly. Your party must hiss, jeer and cat-call from the rise of the curtain. It will influence the rest of the audience and the critics, and insure the failure of the piece.

STAN. Sounds well—but how will I look wearin' a dress suit?

DEV. (*rising*). Lend me your arm. (*Supports himself on STAN.'s arm and crosses L.*) There are a number of details to decide upon to insure the success of our venture. Come quietly. My wife must not know you are here.

[*Exit off L., with STAN., groaning at each step.*]

*Enter JUL., cautiously, c.*

JUL. Oh, I must tell madame.

(*Over to door, R., and knocks on same.*)

GIL. (*from within*). Who is it?

JUL. (*nervously*). Julia. I must see you at once, madame.

*Enter GIL., from R.*

GIL. You're all unstrung. What is it, Julia?

JUL. The trunks are below, madame.

GIL. (*starting*). Goodness! what are we to do?

JUL. And the worst of it is—your husband knows everything.

GIL. Gracious—who could have —— ?

JUL. Ze detective told him. He is here now. They are going to open the trunks and your husband will be what you Americans call—(*endeavors to recall words*) what ees it again? (*Suddenly.*) Oh, yes—“armed to ze teeth.”

GIL. (*nervously*). Where is my husband now?

JUL. (*pointing R.*). In hees room.

GIL. In the rear of the house? Good! (*To JUL.*) Have the trunks brought up here immediately.

JUL. (*surprised*). Here? (*Then adds.*) But ze men-folks, madame?

GIL. I'll see that they get safely away. Hurry, Julia.

JUL. Oui, madame. [*Exit hurriedly, door at back.*]

GIL. (*nervously wringing hands*). Hubby was right. Why, oh, why did I ever return to the stage? (*Enter two expressmen, door C., each wheeling a trunk on hand-trunk trucks; GIL., nervously.*) Put the trunks right here. (*Expressmen set trunks R. C., and L. C. GIL. hands them coin from purse.*) Thank you so much. (*Expressmen exit, C. GIL., nervously to door C. Calls off.*) Julia! Julia!

*Enter JUL., door C.*

JUL. Yes, madame.

GIL. (*handing her trunk key*). Quick! We must release them before it is too late.

(*GIL. and JUL. each unstrap and unlock trunk and lift tops.*

CHAN. and BLAIR are discovered seated in trunks. Both have black eyes, their hair is disheveled, and their clothing badly torn.)

JUL. Hurry, hurry. You must get away.

CHAN. (*sadly*). I can hardly move.

GIL. How you must have suffered.

BLAIR (*sadly*). You don't know what we went through.

CHAN. (*sadly*). Well, you can bet I do. (*Looks around.*) Where are we, anyway?

GIL. You're in my house.

BLAIR (*starting*). Your house?

CHAN. New York or London?

GIL. New York, of course.

CHAN. I feel as if I'd traveled a century.

GIL. (*nervously*). You'll have to be going. My husband —

BLAIR } (*in surprise*). Your husband?

CHAN. } Must we also meet him?

BLAIR. I don't feel equal to it, in my present weakened condition.

GIL. Hurry, hurry.

BLAIR (*moaning*). I can hardly move.

CHAN. (*comfortably reclining in trunk*). I don't want to.

GIL. (*to JUL.*). Take hold, Julia. Every minute counts.

(*Takes hold of BLAIR under arms.*)

JUL. (*taking hold of CHAN.*). Are you ready? (*Counts.*) One, two —

CHAN. (*protesting*). Wait! I'm aches and pains all over. I can better manage it alone. (*Then, after several efforts, finally succeeds in getting out of trunk and sits on edge, breathing hard. Feels of arms.*) I'll bet I'm black and blue all over.

(*GIL. meanwhile has been having trouble with BLAIR.*)

BLAIR (*finally sitting on edge of trunk*). I'll never forget that trip as long as I live.

CHAN. (*sadly*). Neither will I. (*To BLAIR.*) Say, Walter, do you remember that bump we got day before yesterday?

GIL. Day before yesterday? Why, you've only been in the trunks four hours.

CHAN. } Four hours?

BLAIR. }

CHAN. (*shaking head*). And I imagined it at least a month.

JUL. (*nervously, to GIL.*). M'sieur will be coming.

GIL. You're right. (*To CHAN. and BLAIR.*) Come, you must be going.

CHAN. } (*on feet, looking themselves over*). What—and in

BLAIR } this rig?

BLAIR. I'd rather go back to the trunk.

(*Places one foot in trunk.*)

CHAN. I've got to go back. (*Same business.*)

GIL. (*catching him by arm*). No, no—you're risking your life.

CHAN. What's the difference? I'm half dead now.

GIL. I'll find you some of my husband's clothing. In the meantime, get into that room. (*Points R.*)

BLAIR. }  
CHAN. } All right.

(*Make step toward R., and then begin to waver. GIL. and JUL. catch them and hold them up as they are about to fall.*)

BLAIR. I feel as if I'd just stepped off a ship.

CHAN. (*sadly*). And I—from out of a threshing-machine.

GIL. }  
JUL. } We'll help you.

(*Manage to get them off R., as enter OSCAR, door C., still wearing straw hat and carrying several valises.*)

OSCAR. By golly, dot's ober a walk from der depot here. Und I got such a cold in der head. (*Sneezes; then apologetically.*) Oscuse me, please. (*Looks around.*) Oh, I am alone. I only hope she has came home already. (*Enter GIL., hurriedly from R., closing door.*) Ah, dere you are. (*Sneezes.*) Oscuse me, please. I caught such a cold in der train. It stays in der head. I came to run over der new scene mit you.

GIL. (*spinning him out of the way*). Oh, I haven't time now. You'll have to call later. [*Exit, door C.*]

OSCAR (*surprised*). By golly, dot's a reception for you. (*Up to door C., looks after her.*) Now I wonder what's der reason?

*Enter JUL., door R., quickly down to trunks, closing tops with a bang. OSCAR, at door C., starts and watches her, finally giving a loud sneeze.*

JUL. (*starting*). What was that?

OSCAR (*C., with broad smile*). Me.

JUL. (*turning*). How you frightened me.

OSCAR (*with sweeping bow*). Oscuse me, please. I got a cold in der head.

JUL. (*indignant*). Well, I'm glad you've got something there.

(*Starts R.*)

OSCAR (*catching her by wrist*). Shust one minute.

JUL. (*puzzled*). Well, what is it, m'sieur?

OSCAR (*looking around*). Tell me, what is der trouble mit your mistress?

JUL. Trouble? (*Surprised*.) Why, nothing, m'sieur.

OSCAR. Oh, it is someding der matter, I know. Shust now she spin me around like a top, und dis morning she introduce me as her brother or fodder—I fergit which.

JUL. (*seizing him by wrist and placing finger to lips*). S-h.

(*Glances cautiously around, then brings him down stage.*)

OSCAR (*watching her closely, then quickly glancing around himself. Aside*). What's going to happen now?

JUL. (*confidentially*). We didn't have time to explain things, but I will do so now. (*In loud whispers.*) Listen!

OSCAR (*in loud whispers*). Y-e-s.

JUL. When madame said that you were her father, she said it because —

OSCAR (*anxiously*). Yes—because why?

JUL. Because — (*Door-bell rings off. JUL. starts.*) Who can that be? (*Quickly.*) Oh—and I forgot to tell Cora not to open the door for any one. (*To OSCAR.*) Just a minute.

(*Starts for C.*)

OSCAR (*after her*). Yes, yes—but hold on, you didn't tell me der —

*Enter GIL., hurriedly, door C., carrying a bundle of clothing.*

GIL. (*calling*). Julia, Julia, where are you?

JUL. Here, madame.

GIL. (*excitedly*). It's Mrs. Chandler and her daughter. Cora let them in.

JUL. Oh, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. What are we to do?

GIL. (*to JUL.*). They'd better not see you!

OSCAR (*anxiously*). And your fodder?

GIL. (*to OSCAR*). Or you, either.

JUL. } (*wildly running about*). Where can we go?  
OSCAR }

GIL. Hide,—hide! Under the sofa—anywhere! (*At door R.*) Meanwhile I'll give the men some of my husband's old clothes. (*Off R.*)

JUL. (*suddenly*). I have it. The trunks!

OSCAR (*puzzled*). Say, what is dis, anyway? A lunaticum?

JUL. Oh, don't ask questions. (*Opens trunk.*) Here, get in ze trunk. (*Forces him in.*) Hurry, hurry! So.

(*Then gets in other trunk herself.*)

OSCAR (*in trunk; business*). By golly, dis is a new one on me.

(*JUL. and OSCAR lower trunk tops.*)

GIL. (*coming on, R., calling off*). Now do be careful—and remember your wives. (*Closes door.*)

*Enter DEV., from L., assisted by STAN.*

DEV. Ah, I thought I heard the front bell ring. (*Rubs hands together and surveys trunks.*) So your trunks have come at last? (*To STAN.*) Perhaps we're too late.

(*OSCAR, in trunk, sneezes.*)

STAN. Did you hear that? That's the old fellow! He's caught a cold.

DEV. (*brandishing cane*). He'll catch something else, the moment I set eyes on him. (*To STAN.*) Now, then—to your work. (*Enter MRS. C. and BEATTIE, door at back. STAN. steps down to trunks. DEV., surprised, looks at ladies.*) Hello! And who might these ladies be?

GIL. Friends of mine.

MRS. C. (*haughtily*). Friends no longer. We have learned the truth.

DEV. (*anxiously*). The truth? What truth? (*To GIL.*) Who are these ladies?

GIL. (*troubled*). Why—why——

MRS. C. We will introduce ourselves. I am Mrs. Chandler, wife of Roswell Chandler, and this—(*referring to BEATTIE*) is my daughter, Mrs. Blair.

DEV. (*with sarcasm*). In other words, you are the wives of the backers of "The Fleur-de-lis."

MRS. C. (*surprised*). "Fleur-de-lis"!

BEATTIE (*indignant*). I should say not.

MRS. C. It's bad enough our husbands should be infatuated with this song-bird. (*Refers to GIL.*)

STAN. (*his attention arrested*). Ah, then you are the wives of the two men who I tracked to the apartments.

GIL. (*surprised; with flashing eyes*). Then I was right. You are——

STAN. (*with thumbs in vest*). John Stanton, the detective!

GIL. (*handkerchief to eyes; to DEV.*). Oh, how could you be so cruel?

(*Sinks on chair and buries eyes in handkerchief on table.*)

DEV. (*firmly*). I felt it my duty. I had reason to suspect the truth.

BEATTIE (*to MRS. C., brokenly*). You were right after all; they *have* deceived us. (*Weeps on MRS. C.'s shoulder.*)

MRS. C. Be calm, my child. I was certain of it, the moment I found their coats in the room.

STAN. (*to DEV.*). You see, boss, I was *not* mistaken.

BEATTIE (*brokenly*). But where, oh where, to find them!

STAN. (*pompously*). Ladies, I believe I can do that for you. (*Crosses to right of R. trunk. DEV. limps left of other.*)

STAN. *draws a revolver. To DEV.*) Better be ready. They're liable to give us a tussle.

DEV. (*drawing a large old-fashioned revolver from coat pocket and taking hold of top of trunk*). I'm ready for anything.

STAN. Then, ladies, behold—your husbands!

(*DEV. and STAN. simultaneously lift tops of trunks, exposing JUL. and OSCAR to view. GIL., now realizing truth, laughs heartily. MRS. C. and BEATTIE stand aghast.*)

*DEV. and STAN. are astonished.*)

OSCAR (*sneezing*). Oscuse me, blease—I got a cold in der head.

DEV. (*looking at JUL.*). My wife's maid! (*Then to OSCAR.*) But who are you, sir?

OSCAR (*standing up in trunk*). Ober blease, I would rather not——

DEV. (*emphatically*). Who are you, sir?

OSCAR (*appealing to GIL.*). Dot's it—who am I?

DEV. (*emphatically*). Answer me!

(*Stamps bandaged foot, then jumps up and down in great pain.*)

OSCAR (*troubled*). Well, since you are so anxious. I am your wife's sister.

ALL. What?

OSCAR (*business*). No, no—her brother ——— (*Stammers.*) I got dot mixed—I should say, her fodder.

DEV. A vagabond—a lunatic—I vow! (*Angrily.*) Clear out, you good-for-nothing, and lose no time.

OSCAR (*confusedly out of trunk and edging toward door c.*). I'm only too glad to git der chance. (*Sneezes.*) Oscuse me, I got a cold in der head. (*Off door at back.*)

STAN. He'll bear watching. I intend to track him to his lair. (*Up to door c.*)

DEV. (*disgusted*). Well, it's about time you did something besides draw your salary. Don't forget to-night.

STAN. (*drawing himself to a height*). See here, boss, John Stanton never forgets anything. (*Off door c.*)

DEV. (*to JUL.*). And as for you, you can consider your notice given. After the first of the month, I'll have no further need of your services.

JUL. (*pleadingly*). But, m'sieur.

DEV. (*limping on foot to L.*). Not another word. That is final. (*JUL., with handkerchief to eyes, off c., goes L., loudly weeping.* DEV., *to MRS. C. and BEATTIE.*) I'm sorry, ladies, to have disappointed you. But better luck next time. If you will step into the library, I shall be pleased to hear your stories.

MRS. C. Thank you, sir. (*To BEATTIE.*) Come, dear, it will be some relief to unburden our sad experiences to a sympathetic listener. (*Her arm about BEATTIE, leads her L. Turns to DEV.*) Thank you so much. (*Off together, L.*)

DEV. (*to GIL.*). Now, then, madam, I wish you to understand that I have not been deceived by the trunk episode. Until I have your promise to retire from the footlights—(*dramatically*) never speak to me again. (*Off door L.*)

GIL. (*despairingly*). Oh, what shall I do? Unless this awful mix-up is satisfactorily explained, I'll very likely lose my husband, home and everything. (*Wrings hands.*) Oh, why—oh, why didn't I heed his advice from the first?

BLAIR (*from within, R.*). Can we come in now?

GIL. (*nervously*). Wait. (*Glances around; then pushes door R. open.*) Yes; but please hurry off. (*Comes down L.*)

*Enter CHAN. and BLAIR, both wearing badly-fitting clothing,*

BLAIR'S *being much too tight for him, and* CHAN.'s *much too loose. Both appear ludicrous.*

CHAN. } How do we look?  
BLAIR. }

GIL. (*looking them over*). Gracious! Simply awful!

(CHAN. and BLAIR *look themselves over*.)

BLAIR. Do you know, we sort of had that notion ourselves.

CHAN. (*nervously*). And the detective?

GIL. Just left a moment ago.

BLAIR. I'll bet two pins he's laying for us down-stairs.

CHAN. Let him lay. He won't catch me going down.

GIL. (*emphatically*). Well, you can't remain here like this.

BLAIR. No, and we can't go away *like this*.

(*Refers to clothing*.)

GIL. It will be suicide if you stay.

CHAN. (*looking himself over*). And it'll be worse than that if we venture forth.

GIL. (*wildly, c.*). And now I want you to know that I've resigned from the company.

CHAN. } (*staggered*). No!  
BLAIR. }

BLAIR. Resigned from the company?

GIL. Yes, I'm through with the stage forever.

BLAIR (*pleadingly*). But you can't leave us this way. Look at our investment!

CHAN. Every dollar will be lost.

GIL. I can't help that. I should never have crossed my husband's wishes.

CHAN. But what of ours? Surely, you're not going to quit on a moment's notice?

GIL. Yes, I'm through right now.

BLAIR. No, no, you can't. We'll hold you to your two weeks' clause!

GIL. (*defiant*). Oh, you will, will you? Well, we'll see about that.

CHAN. (*on knees, pleadingly*). No, no, we didn't mean to say just that.

BLAIR (*on knees, other side of her*). Forgive me, I——

CHAN. At least see us through the opening night.

BLAIR. In the meantime, perhaps we can arrange for a substitute. Only don't desert us; we'll lose everything if you do.

CHAN. (*ready to cry*). I'll be worse than bankrupt.

(*Door-bell rings below.*)

GIL. (*starting*). Probably the detective again.

CHAN. } (*nervously appealing to her*). Please say you won't

BLAIR } desert us—at least until to-morrow.

GIL. (*nervously*). Quick—hide somewhere.

CHAN. By Jove! not until you promise.

BLAIR (*firmly*). We're desperate now. Come, your answer.

GIL. Well, since you force me to speak and I have no alternative, I won't resign until to-morrow.

BLAIR (*lifting trunk top*). Ah, that, at least, gives us hope.

CHAN. (*lifting other trunk top*). Which is about *all* we have got.

GIL. (*excitedly*). Hurry, hurry.

(CHAN. and BLAIR *climb into trunks.*)

CHAN. (*sadly*). There's no place like home.

(*They close tops.*)

GIL. (*sighing in relief*). Thank goodness, they weren't seen. It would have been dreadful. (*Moves R.*)

*Enter MAL., hurriedly, door at back.*

MAL. Pardon my intrusion in this abrupt manner, but I'm looking for the wives of Messrs. Roswell Chandler and Walter Blair.

*Enter DEV., from L.*

DEV. They are here, sir. (*Calls off.*) Ladies!

*Enter MRS. C. and BEATTIE, anxiously, from L.*

MRS. C. } (*anxiously to MAL.*). What is it?

BEATTIE }

BEATTIE (*eagerly*). I can see by your face something has happened.

MAL. (*taking c.*). It has. (*To MRS. C. and BEATTIE.*) Ladies, your husbands were both at Atlantic City this forenoon?

MRS. C. } (*breathlessly*). Yes, yes.  
BEATTIE }

MAL. As a reporter, it is my duty to obtain the news. I have news for you.

MRS. C. } (*anxiously*). Go on—go on!  
BEATTIE }

MAL. (*handing MRS. C. piece of paper*). Is that your husband's handwriting? (*Then hands another piece to BEATTIE.*) And yours?

MRS. C. } (*each quickly scanning paper*). Yes, yes.  
BEATTIE }

MAL. Those notes were found in the "Sea Breeze Hotel" just after you had taken your departure.

BEATTIE (*looking at paper*). What's this? (*Reads aloud.*) "When you read this, I will have put an end to my misery."

MRS. C. (*reading from her paper*). "I can no longer stand the terrific strain."

MRS. C. } (*looking up*). It doesn't mean ——?  
BEATTIE }

MAL. (*slowly nodding head in affirmative*). It is my painful duty to speak the truth. Those letters, with the finding of their coats, conclusively prove—(*distinctly*) that both your husbands have committed suicide!

MRS. C. (*giving a cry and fainting in DEV.'s arms*). Poor Roswell!

BEATTIE (*same instant fainting in GIL.'s arms*). Poor Walter!

(CHAN. and BLAIR half-way raise tops of trunks, and unseen by others, exchange glances as the curtain descends.)

CURTAIN

### ACT III

SCENE.—*The same. Time, evening. Two trunks in same position as in previous act.*

*Enter JUL., door C., with two newspapers.*

JUL. (*looking cautiously about, then tiptoeing to door R., looks off, after which comes down C., and knocks on both trunks*). Are you in?

CHAN. } (*lifting tops of trunks and bobbing heads out*).

BLAIR } Don't we look it?

JUL. (*finger to lips*). S-h, not too loud. M'sieur is in ze next room. (*Points R.*)

BLAIR. Have you the evening papers?

JUL. Yes. (*Hands one to each.*)

CHAN. (*eagerly*). Now to learn the worst.

BLAIR (*scanning paper*). Don't we know *that* already? (*Suddenly.*) Hello. (*Reads.*) "Retired broker and son-in-law commit suicide."

CHAN. (*sitting up in trunk, sadly shaking head*). Then it wasn't a joke. They really believe us dead, after all.

BLAIR (*sitting up*). Just listen. (*Reads.*) "Throw themselves in the sea at Atlantic City after writing farewell notes."

CHAN. (*bitterly*). I knew those confounded notes would get us into trouble. It's all your fault.

BLAIR. 'Tis not.

CHAN. 'Tis.

BLAIR. Oh, very well. Have it your way, then. Listen. (*Reads.*) "Bodies not recovered as yet."

CHAN. (*feeling of shoulder*). And mine never will, from the looks of things.

BLAIR (*reading*). "Not known what reason they may have had ——"

CHAN. (*shaking head*). We know.

BLAIR (*continuing*). —— "but is generally attributed by their friends to a sudden attack of insanity."

CHAN. Now we're crazy, too. Anything else?

JUL. Ze papers are just full of it. Got your pictures and everything. They all think you drowned.

CHAN. Well, I'll starve to death, that's certain, unless I soon get something to eat.

JUL. (*feelingly*). Are you hungry, m'sieur?

BLAIR } (*together*). Are we hungry?

CHAN. I haven't had a morsel of anything since morning.

JUL. I'm so sorry. Just wait. (*Up to door c.*) I will try to get you something.

CHAN. Don't be particular. A steak—French chop—roast fowl—anything like that will do.

BLAIR (*throwing JUL. kiss*). You're a dear.

JUL. (*at door c.*). It will not be an easy matter without ze cook knowing it—but I will do ze best I can. (*Off door c.*)

BLAIR. } Don't be long!

CHAN. }

BLAIR (*looking at paper*). Shall I read the rest of it?

CHAN. No, I'm satisfied we're in an awful stew.

BLAIR. If only we had some clothing.

CHAN. (*whining*). If only we had a lot of things. Do you know, I've about made up my mind not to disappoint the papers.

BLAIR (*surprised*). You mean—by committing suicide?

CHAN. Just what. We've got to do something.

BLAIR. Why not make a clean breast of it and throw ourselves on the mercy of our wives?

CHAN. Horrible! I'd rather throw *myself* under a steam roller.

BLAIR. Well, what are we to do?

*Enter GIL., dressed for the street, R.*

CHAN. (*looking at GIL.*). Ah, you alone can help us.

GIL. (*coming down c.*). Haven't I done everything possible to get you out of those trunks?

BLAIR. Yes—but the fact is—we don't want to get out—just yet.

CHAN. (*sadly*). No; home was never like this.

GIL. (*brokenly*). It was cruel of you to draw me into your affair.

BLAIR. We haven't done *all* the drawing. There have been other artists.

GIL. Well, after my two weeks' notice expires, I want it distinctly understood I'm no longer a member of the company.

BLAIR (*overjoyed*). Ah, then you're going to give us at least two weeks —

GIL. (*firmly*). Yes. I've decided it is only right, that no matter what the cost, I ought to live up to the contract I signed.

BLAIR (*clapping hands*). Bravo!

GIL. I will prepare the usual notice and be prepared to deliver it immediately after the performance to-night. (*Then suddenly glances R.*) S-h—my husband!

(CHAN. and BLAIR lower trunk tops and disappear from view.)

*Enter DEV., limping on cane, door R.*

DEV. Ah, I see you're still here.

GIL. (*nervously*). Yes. I wanted to ask you to reconsider your decision with reference to —

DEV. (*emphatically bringing down cane*). Not unless you resign from the company at once.

GIL. (*pleadingly*). But I've already told you so many times it would be unfair for me to desert my managers without giving them time to get some one in my stead.

DEV. My word must be law. Either I am to be obeyed or —

GIL. (*firmly*). Much as I would like to do what you ask, I feel it my duty to live up to the contract I entered into.

DEV. As you will. (*Waves her off.*) There's no further need to discuss the subject. (*Abruptly.*) Good-night.

(*Starts for door R.*)

GIL. Very well, then. Good-night. [*Exit, c.*

DEV. (*halting at door R. and slowly turning*). Hello. She's gone! (*Limps up to c. door.*) Here—hold on! (*Looks off.*) I thought by being a little abrupt, I'd bring her to her senses. (*Shakes head.*) Gad, she's a will of her own. And yet, after all, I don't much blame her for insisting on carrying out the terms of her contract. (*Proudly.*) In fact, I give her credit for it. Only, it will make me look mighty small unless I manage by hook or crook, in some way or other, to get the upper hand. (*Enter MAL., hurriedly door c., looking back. Unknowingly collides with DEV.*) You confounded idiot!

MAL. (*turning and espying DEV.*). Oh, hello, old man, just the party I am looking for.

DEV. (*starting for R.*). Guess you want to see my wife.

MAL. (*catching him by arm*). Just met *her* on the stairs. Asked her a simple question and she whirled me around like a top. That's a habit she's got.

DEV. (*sharply*). The matter does not concern me, sir. What do you want here, anyway?

MAL. (*taking note-book from pocket*). I'm after a story for my paper. Perhaps *you* would care to ——

DEV. (*angrily*). I don't *care* to do anything.

MAL. Yes, but your wife is the star of ——

DEV. Will you leave me alone? (*Emphatically.*) I tell you I don't care to discuss this or any other subject with you, sir.

MAL. (*catching him by arm again, and turning him as he is about to go*). But it is rumored that you and your wife contemplate a divorce ——

DEV. (*starting*). Eh? What? How's that? It's an infamous falsehood!

MAL. (*hurriedly writing in book*). Divorce denied! (*Looks up.*) The thing's common gossip.

DEV. There's altogether too much gossip in New York. That's why I've made up my mind to return to Europe.

MAL. (*writing*). Ah—"returning to Europe." (*Looks up.*) On what steamer, please?

DEV. (*clapping hand over mouth*). Oh, I didn't mean to speak to you, sir. (*Anxiously.*) Have you been writing that down? (*Brandishes cane.*) You reporters are a common nuisance. Leave me alone, sir! I've nothing to say for publication! Nothing! It's all my wife's fault I'm pestered this way. I'd give thirty thousand dollars to break her theatrical contract.

MAL. (*writing in book*). Thirty thousand dollars, you say? (*Looks up.*) Maybe I can fix it for you.

DEV. (*furious*). Leave me—leave me!

MAL. (*handing him business card*). Have a card. I'm also in the real estate and brokerage business and can sell anything from a ——

DEV. (*wildly, as he exits R.*). Leave me—leave me, I say.

(*Off R., loudly slamming door.*)

MAL. (*repeating, as he writes in note-book*). "I'd give thirty thousand to break her contract." (*Scratches head and looks at book.*) There's something back of this. I'll just chip

along and see what it is. I may be on the trail of a half page scoop. (*Gets behind screen.*)

*Enter JULIA, door C., a long loaf of bread behind her back.*

JUL. (*looking around, then down to C.*). Now for ze signal.

(*Whistles.*)

CHAN. } (*bobbing heads out of trunk*). Get anything?  
BLAIR }

JUL. (*handing BLAIR a loaf of bread*). Zis was all I could get.

CHAN. (*sadly*). But where do I come in?

BLAIR (*breaking loaf of bread across knee and handing*

CHAN. *smaller piece*). Here's your half.

(CHAN. and BLAIR both begin to hurriedly eat bread. MAL. bobs head over screen and, watching proceedings, hurriedly makes notes in book.)

JUL. (C.). Ze cook watch me all ze time.

BLAIR (*waving her off with loaf of bread*). It's all right, girlie. You did nobly.

CHAN. (*with mouth filled; hardly audible*). It's delicious!

BLAIR (*with hand to ear*). I didn't get that. Come again.

CHAN. (*speaking with difficulty, as before*). I say—it's delicious.

BLAIR. Got me. You'd better hire a phonograph.

JUL. (*looking around*). Now I will bring you each a glass of water.

BLAIR. And the menu will be complete. Yes, do, that's a dear. [*Exit JUL., L.*]

CHAN. (*calling after her*). But, say—how about the dessert?

BLAIR (*eating*). Don't be so particular. I don't know when I've eaten anything quite so tasty.

CHAN. I was nearly starved out.

MAL. (*cautiously from behind screen and down C., suddenly appearing before them*). Ah, gentlemen!

BLAIR } (*dropping bread, confusedly attempting to lower*

CHAN. } *trunk tops*). The jig's up!

MAL. (*catching hold of each top*). Hold on. Don't be in a hurry.

BLAIR (*indignant*). Who are you, sir?

CHAN. (*imitating him*). Yes, who are you?

MAL. (*quietly*). I'm a reporter.

BLAIR } (*confusedly attempting to lower trunk tops*).

CHAN. } Good-night.

MAL. (*catching trunk tops as before*). But don't let that worry you. I know everything.

CHAN. (*sadly*). And I suppose by to-morrow your confounded paper will have done the rest.

MAL. (*looking at BLAIR*). You're Blair, and you're—(*referring to CHAN.*) old Chandler.

CHAN. (*indignant*). Yes—only forget the "old" part of it.

MAL. (*looking from one to another; in surprise*). You're a nice-looking crowd.

CHAN. (*whining*). Yes, but please don't rub it in.

MAL. But I thought you both dead!

BLAIR. And you tried to make every one else believe it. Well, it's not our fault we're not.

CHAN. (*sadly*). No. How would you like to spend four-and-twenty hours in this thing? (*Refers to trunk.*)

MAL. I don't think I'd like it.

CHAN. Well, I *know* you wouldn't.

MAL. (*taking note-book from pocket*). Aren't you two the owners of the new opera, "The Fleur-de-lis"?

BLAIR (*sadly*). I don't suppose it will do any good to deny it —

CHAN. Unfortunately—we are.

MAL. (*writing busily in book*). Just so.

BLAIR (*watching him for an instant; then after a sigh*). I wish I'd never been born.

CHAN. I wish I had my money back.

MAL. (*writing in book*). It's too bad I didn't meet you gentlemen a half hour sooner.

BLAIR. Could have used this story in your earlier edition, I suppose.

CHAN. (*eagerly*). Say, old chap, I'll give you a hundred to keep this out of your sheet. What will my friends say when they read—(*whining*) "Found in a trunk"? Oh, I'm disgraced!

MAL. Pshaw, you don't understand me.

BLAIR (*quickly*). Ah, I see—he offered too little. Well, I'll raise that to three hundred. Now what do you say?

MAL. I could get more than that as commission —

CHAN. (*puzzled*). Commission?

MAL. Yes, commission. (*Looks at BLAIR.*) I heard you wish you'd never been born—(*then to CHAN.*) and you—to have your money back.

CHAN. (*puzzled*). What are you, anyway?

MAL. A poor reporter, but with an eye to business. Now what's in it for me if I manage to ——

BLAIR. You don't mean—dispose of "The Fleur-de-lis"?

CHAN. Oh, you can't be serious.

MAL. Give me the opportunity and see.

BLAIR (*emphatically; rising in trunk*). In a minute.

CHAN. (*also rising*). And ten per cent. besides.

MAL. (*offering hands*). Accepted!

BLAIR } (*warmly shaking his hands; then stepping out of*  
CHAN. } (*trunks and lowering tops*). But how in the world  
          } will you ——

MAL. (*finger to lips*). S-h! Leave everything to me.

*Enter DEV., door R.*

DEV. (*angrily, on beholding MAL.*). What—you again?

CHAN. } (*confusedly*). Oh, lor'.  
BLAIR }

(*Hurriedly endeavor to hide behind MAL.*)

MAL. And brought two friends with me.

DEV. (*furious*). I knew your impudence would know no bounds. Bring a hundred—bring five hundred reporters—and still my lips will be sealed for the papers. (*Opens door R.*)

MAL. Just a minute. This is something altogether different. You mentioned that you were willing to give thirty thousand dollars to break your wife's contract.

DEV. Yes, but that was only in ——

MAL. I can buy the entire production for that amount.

DEV. (*surprised*). You don't mean it?

MAL. I certainly do. (*To CHAN. and BLAIR.*) Gentlemen, know Major Deveau. (*Steps aside, presenting CHAN. and BLAIR to view; they make a sorry showing. To DEV.*) Major, know Messrs. Chandler and Blair,—(*referring to each*) the owners of the production.

DEV. (*staggered*). Well, well, well. (*Looks from one to the other. Then with bitterness.*) So you—you are the persons who ——

CHAN. (*alarmed; getting behind MAL.*). He's off!

MAL. (*stepping between them ; to DEV.*). Once the owner of the production, you could then do with it as you wish.

DEV. (*changing manner ; stroking mustache*). Even to closing it down tight as a drum, if I willed it, eh ?

MAL. Even that. My clients here—(*referring to CHAN. and BLAIR*) have a valuable piece of dramatic property, but would consider a sale if you saw your way clear to raising your offer say—ten thousand ——

DEV. (*whistling*). Forty thousand dollars !

MAL. (*coolly to CHAN. and BLAIR*). You'd consider letting go at that figure, gentlemen ? (*Nudges BLAIR.*)

BLAIR (*starting*). Oh, yes—yes.

CHAN. (*aside*). I'd let go for a sandwich.

DEV. (*stroking mustache*). It's a lot of money. But step into the library, gentlemen. It's just possible we may be able to do business together. This way. (*Off R. I.*)

BLAIR (*slapping MAL. heavily on shoulder*). You're a wonder.

MAL. (*with wink of eye*). Pretty good—what ?

(*Offers arms.*)

CHAN. You've certainly saved our lives.

(*CHAN. and BLAIR lock arms in MAL.'s and exit, R., heartily laughing.*)

*Enter JUL., from L., with two tumblers of water.*

JUL. (*looking around*). Hello, where have they got to, I wonder ? (*Down to trunk, R., lifts top.*) Gone ! (*Hurriedly lifts top of other trunk.*) Gone ! (*Puzzled.*) What if ze ——

*Enter MRS. C. and BEATTIE, both dressed in deep mourning, door C. JUL. staggered.*

MRS. C. (*brokenly*). We've come to see Mr. Mallory, the reporter.

JUL. (*stammering*). But, madame, I do not think he is ——

BEATTIE (*brokenly*). They told us at the newspaper office that we would most likely find him here.

MRS. C. We wish to learn whether he has heard anything additional ——

BEATTIE (*brokenly*). Whether he can give us one ray of hope —— (*Then unable longer to restrain her emotions,*

*places handkerchief to eyes and loudly sobs.*) Oh, Walter! Walter! how could you? how could you?

MRS. C. (*ready to cry herself; comforting her*). Don't, Beattie, child. (*Then through her own sobs.*) Think of your poor, departed father—my own dear Roswell!

(*Loudly sobs. BEATTIE and MRS. C. are now both crying.*)

JUL. (*watching them intently*). Please don't cry, ladies—please don't cry.

(*Finally slowly places handkerchief to eyes and joins them in sobbing.*)

*Enter MAL., hurriedly from R., unconcernedly down C.; then suddenly espying ladies, gives a start and with long strides noiselessly endeavors to retrace his steps.*

MRS. C. } (*finally cease crying, and looking up, in time to*  
BEATTIE } *espy MAL., before he has chance to exit*). Ah—  
          } here you are!

(*Catch him by coat-tails and drag him C.*)

MAL. (*struggling*). Yes, ladies, but a very important engagement. I'll return in a minute. Excuse me, please—  
(*Finally ceases struggles; aside.*) Oh, it's no use, I give up.

(*JUL. meanwhile has exited door C.*)

MRS. C. (*brokenly to MAL.*). Tell me, is there any news?

BEATTIE (*anxiously*). About my husband?

MRS. C. My husband?

BEATTIE. }  
MRS. C. } Both our husbands?

MAL. (*nervously*). Ladies, I hardly know what to say.

BEATTIE } (*anxiously*). Go on—go on—say it—say it!  
MRS. C. }

MAL. You know when I saw you this afternoon, I—you—that is——

BEATTIE. }  
MRS. C. } Don't keep us in suspense.

MAL. (*aside*). How can I explain matters?

MRS. C. You don't mean that they're still alive?

MAL. (*quickly shaking head in negative*). Oh, no—oh, no—  
—I don't mean anything like that.

MRS. C. (*brokenly*). I knew it—I knew it. They're dead—drowned! Poor Roswell!

BEATTIE (*sobbingly*). Poor Walter!

(MRS. C. and BEATTIE *bury heads on MAL.'s shoulder and sob loudly.*)

MAL. (*his arms about their waists; comforting them*). There, there, don't take on so. (*Aside.*) How can I break it to them?

*Enter CHAN. and BLAIR, hurriedly, door R.*

AN. } (*suddenly beholding MAL.; start*). What's this?  
BLAIR }

(*Then each down, seizing wife by arm. BLAIR forcing BEATTIE right of him; CHAN. forcing MRS. C. left of him.*)

CHAN. (*to MRS. C., in assumed anger*). So this is the way you cherish the memory of your departed husbands?

BEATTIE. } Then you didn't commit suicide after all?  
MRS. C. }

BLAIR. } No, we changed our minds and disappointed you.  
CHAN. }

BEATTIE (*on her knees; to BLAIR*). Forgive me, dear.

BLAIR (*folding arms; waving her off*). To think I should find you in another's arms! Ye gods!

MRS. C. (*on knees; to CHAN.*). Roswell, I was only——

CHAN. (*imitating BLAIR; stamping foot*). Silence! I saw all with my own eyes. (*Folds arms and assumes angry look.*) Also, ye gods!

*Enter OSCAR, breathlessly, door C., a large flower wreath on his head.*

OSCAR. Oh, I'm so glad I find you.

(*Grasps hands of CHAN. and BLAIR and shakes them.*)

CHAN. } Great Scott! what has happened?  
BLAIR }

MAL. (*anxiously*). Is it over?

OSCAR (*jubilantly*). Yes, by now. (*Excitedly.*) I jumped in a taxi shust before der curtain came down. Oh, it was a great night. Such a success has nevah been. Only one unpleasantness. A loafer hissed in der first act—und der ushers

chucked him out. Den everything was peaceful. Ten times dey raised der curtain on der second act. I made a speech und received a beautiful wreath of flowers so big.

*(Indicates by hands that wreath must have been six or seven feet in height.)*

MAL. *(removing wreath from his head and handing it to him)*. Is this it?

OSCAR. By Jove—ches.

MAL. Then it must have shrunk some since you last saw it.

OSCAR. In der excitement I thought it wuz my hat. *(Bows to ladies.)* Oscuse me, ladies. *(To CHAN. and BLAIR.)* It will run for a year in New York—dot's certain. Your fortune is made.

MAL. *(looking from CHAN. to BLAIR)*. Have you made a mistake after all?

CHAN. I'm glad to be out—at any price.

OSCAR *(puzzled)*. Mistake? Price?

BLAIR. We sold out only a minute ago.

OSCAR *(staggered)*. You—you sold "The Fleur-de-lis"?

MRS. C. } *(looking at husbands)*. You sold it?  
BEATTIE }

*(BLAIR and CHAN. nod heads in affirmative.)*

BLAIR. But only as the agents of our friend, here —

*(Refers to MAL.)*

CHAN. Who owned it all along, eh, old chap?

*(Digs MAL. in side.)*

MAL. Yes—all along.

OSCAR *(running hands through hair)*. Oh, yoi, yoi, yoi—what a foolishness.

*Enter DEV., door R.*

DEV. *(anxiously)*. What's this I hear about the opera?

MAL. You've made a great bargain. Ought to treble your money in two months.

OSCAR *(looking at MAL.)*. Is he den der — *(Over to DEV., warmly shakes his hand.)* Ah—you lucky, lucky man!

*Enter STAN., door C. His clothing is badly torn, his hair disheveled, and one eye is blackened.*

DEV. (*surprised*). Stanton!

STAN. (*crestfallen*). Yes, boss. I tried to follow your instructions about queering the show, but the ushers got to me —

OSCAR (*triumphant*). Before any damage was done. (*Eagerly to STAN.*) Ah, so you are der one who made such a rumpus in der first act? I ought to —

(*Raises hand as if to strike STAN.*)

DEV. (*catching OSCAR by arm*). Let him be. He did it by my instruction.

OSCAR (*surprised*). Your instruction? You wanted to ruin your own show? Ach himmel, I'm in a lunaticum!

(*Goes up.*)

*Enter JUL., door C.*

JUL. (*announcing GIL.*). Madame, m'sieur.

*Enter GIL., door C.*

ALL. Congratulations on your success.

GIL. Thank you. (*To CHAN. and BLAIR.*) And now in deference to my husband's wishes, I formally hand you this —

(*Hands BLAIR a letter.*)

BLAIR. Why, what is it?

GIL. My two weeks' notice.

BLAIR. Which should now go to your husband.

(*Hands to DEV.*)

GIL. (*astonished*). My husband?

CHAN. Yes, he having bought the same only a half hour ago.

DEV. (*to GIL.*). And since the thing's proven such an emphatic success, hang me, if I don't think I'll keep it going.

ALL. Really?

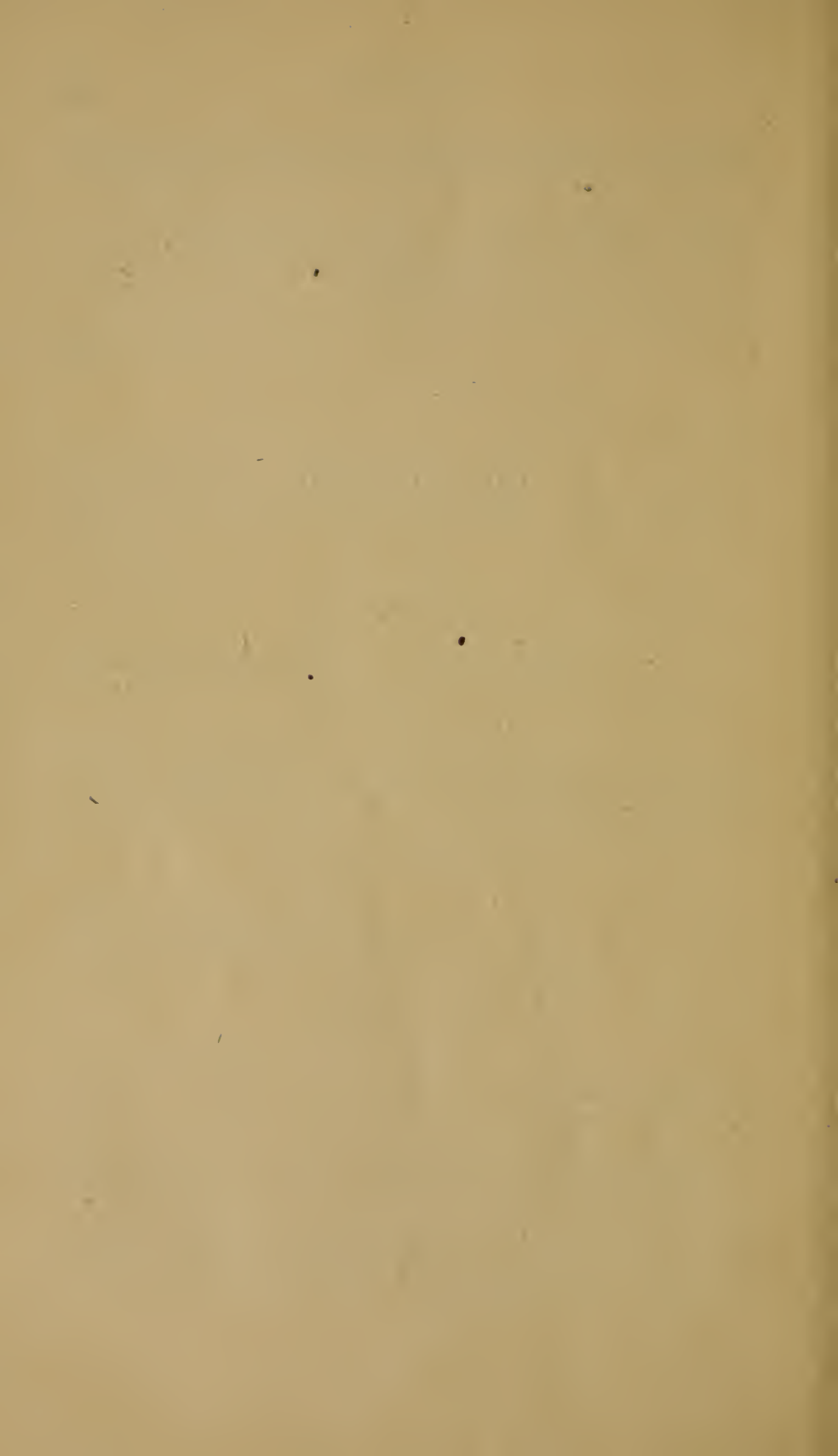
DEV. (*tearing notice in particles and close to GIL.*). Only hereafter my wife will be *managed* —

GIL. (*looking up at him*). By her husband!

BEATTIE } (*taking hold of their husbands by collar of coat*).  
MRS. C. } And *you* —  
BLAIR } (*after a pause ; meekly*). By—*our wives*.  
CHAN. }

PICTURE

QUICK CURTAIN



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TIMOTHY HODD, *who would rather whittle than work.*

DEACON POTTER, *"just a trifle deaf."*

WILLIAM HENRY.

TOM SPARROW.

Mr. FILKINS, *an officer.*

HELEN BURLEIGH, *from the city.*

JERUSHA JANE JUDKINS, *the post-mistress.*

ROXY, *"a fresh air kid."*

GRANNY GRIMES.

FANNY, *a maid.*

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ACT I. — Yard of Miss Judkins's store and postoffice, Mullenville, N. Y., on a morning in August.

ACT II. — Same as Act I, half an hour later.

ACT III. — Granny Grimes's garret, on the East Side, New York City, the following November.

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ACT V. — Back at Mullenville, in Miss Judkins's sitting-room. One month has elapsed.

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COUNT DE MUSSET, after the 1,000 acres and Arvilla Wicks.

ARCHIE BARTON, a young lawyer, after the widow.

GEORGE MANGAN, with an admiration for wealth.

TOM SHARPE, a retired detective, faithful to Karrenhappuch Wicks.

ADONIRAM SMITH, the hired man, with a fickle heart.

ARVILLA WICKS, heiress of the 1,000 acres.

MRS. PETER SCHULTZ, owner of many jewels.

MRS. BARRY BLAND, owner of a husband and a daughter.

BARRETTA BLAND, ten and talkative.

MISS KARRENHAPPUCH WICKS, sister to Joshua.

WIDOW WILKINS, after a rich husband.

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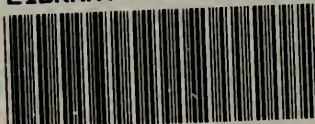
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